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Refinery cleanup ready to begin

By KRIS KNOWLES

Tribune Writer

The initial phase of cleanup at Chanut's contaminated refinery site will start next week and is expected to last up to four months.

A St. Louis contractor hired to oversee the cleanup will begin setting up at the abandoned refinery on Monday, said Carl Bailey, an on-scene coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency.

Bailey was among seven federal and state environmental officials gathered for three hours Wednesday at Neosho County Community College to answer residents' questions about the refinery cleanup. Only one local resident attended the meeting.

"We would have liked to have seen more people," said Helen Tinson, community relations coordinator for the EPA.

Bailey has estimated the initial refinery cleanup could cost up to \$2.2 million. Work will focus on

the removal of asbestos pipe insulation; mercury and other chemicals in lab buildings; drums of waste; and open sludge pits.

Bailey said officials will also study the content of numerous large tanks on the 89-acre site. Depending on the findings, material in the tanks could be included in the initial cleanup phase.

Even if material in the tanks is removed, Bailey said it's unlikely that federal money would ever be used to pay for the removal of the tanks themselves.

The primary cleanup contractor is Riedel Environmental Services, which is based in Portland, Ore., and has a regional office in St. Louis. Bailey said the company has a national contract with the EPA to clean up sites around the country.

The company is expected to have a staff of about nine working in Chanut, and the EPA will have a supervisor on site at all times.

See REFINERY, Page 8

8-11-94

Site:	Mid-America Ref.
ID#	10000001545
Break:	133
Other:	
	11194



S00098060
SUPERFUND RECORDS

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Charley Bowers, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, talks with Carl Bailey, an on-scene coordinator for the Environmental Protection Agency Wednesday at NCCC. Bailey was among seven federal and state environmental officials on

for three hours to answer residents' questions about the refinery cleanup.

MARK COLSON/Tribune

Plans ready to begin refinery cleanup

Continued from Page 1

Riedel will be responsible for all of the cleanup work except asbestos removal, which will be handled by a subcontractor that has not yet been hired. Bailey estimated that two-thirds of the cleanup cost could be devoted to asbestos removal because of the time and manpower that will be

required.

The asbestos will be taken to a landfill — possibly the Chanute landfill if it is accepted by the city, he said.

Mercury removed from the site will be recycled, and oil sludges and other chemicals will be taken to an approved disposal facility. Most will eventually be incinerated, while others will be

neutralized for disposal in a landfill.

The initial cleanup costs are being paid by federal Superfund moneys, but efforts to get money from the refinery's owners will continue, said EPA attorney Ilene Martello.

The refinery is owned by the Texas-based Robert Cooley Investment Trust, which bought the property at a county tax sale

last year. The EPA has ordered the trust to clean up the property.

Martello said trust representatives on Wednesday requested a 90-day extension so they would have more time to obtain financing to clean up and re-start the refinery.

"That's what we've been hearing for a year and a half," Martello said.

TO:
HELEN TINSON

